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THEATER NEWS

Leonard Moore's Plans for Little Theater

By Stuart W. Little

FORTY-FOURTH STREET'S Little Theater, halfway between Sardi's and "Hello, Dolly!", a 603-seat intimate theater with four big musical houses as neighbors, has changed ownership.

The theater has been acquired by Leonard B. Moore, a former newspaperman with a background of government service, and Richard S. Smith, a stock broker and real estate man.

Mr. Moore plans to give the theater full-time management. He will be looking for straight plays with small casts preferably headed by stars and he regards the present booking, "Baby Wants a Kiss," co-starring Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, as just about ideal. Since April 19, this show has been doing sell-out business.

But it is the only profitable booking since the Little Theater reopened as a legitimate theater last fall. It had been under lease to ABC television since 1951.

This season the small

theater with the large stage and the network of handsome theatrical offices upstairs that Winthrop Ames built in 1913 has been run by a group of businessmen headed by Roger Euster.

"Euster has many other business interests and could not devote sufficient time to the operation of the theater," Mr. Moore said yesterday. Euster was head of a corporation in which the stockholders were himself, Leonard Tow, Mr. Moore and eight smaller stockholders. Mr. Moore acquired the ownership share of Euster and Tow. At the same time he also acquired a half ownership of the Ritz Theater, Avenue of the Americas and 48th St.

Moore, the new owner manager, is a graduate of Amherst College in 1951 and worked for five years in Washington with the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense and the State Department. Afterward, he joined the staff of the Hartford Courant for three years and later headed the Southwest bureau of the Wall Street

Journal, located in Dallas. He became a partner of Euster in Interwest, Inc., 149 Broadway, a firm which specializes in developing business opportunities in undeveloped countries.

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